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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 26 September 1991, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. CARIAS ZAPATA	(Honduras)
later:	Mr. AL-KHUSSAIBY	(Oman)

- Address by Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname

- General debate [9] (continued)

  Statements made by

  Mr. Solanki (India)

  Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea)

/...

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Mr. Niehaus Quesada (Costa Rica)

Mr. Kravchanka (Belarus)

Mr. Jaramillo (Colombia)

Mr. Carias Zapata (Honduras)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. RUNALDO RONALD VENETIAAN, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Suriname.

Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Suriname, His Excellency Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President VENETIAAN: The sequence of events which recently shook the world is clear evidence that ultimately the process of democratic change cannot be reversed. The democratic concepts and values that are now sweeping the world are recognized as the most important unifying forces on this planet and the only reliable basis for justice, equality, prosperity and peaceful coexistence. Indeed, it is the universal acceptance of the dynamics of the process of democratization that justifies the current wave of expressions of expectations for a better future.

In this context we wish to share with members the lessons learned in our short history as an independent nation and to highlight, as a responsible member of the family of nations, what contributions the people of Suriname are making to the new hopes of the international community.

After a sad and unexpected interruption of the democratic process in my country, which had gained new momentum in 1987, the people of Suriname have again - through a free expression of their will in general elections this year - demonstrated their unswerving belief in democracy. In a peaceful

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manner and with dignity our people have repeated their determination to remain in the ranks of those who have pledged to make every necessary sacrifice to put an end to the era of authoritarian and totalitarian rule.

The people of Suriname have experienced the value and impact of international solidarity. In organizing our renewed expressions of freedom and democracy we have received inestimable encouragement and political support. On this memorable occasion we wish to express our appreciation and sincere gratitude to all individuals, organizations - among others the Organization of American States and the European Community - and sympathetic Governments and peoples that supported us during our long and arduous reorientation to democracy. I wish to repeat here that we shall always remember all fellow-countrymen who gave their lives in our quest for freedom, justice and democracy, or who lost their lives in the performance of their duties.

We have built a bridge to the new world and have helped to tear down the barriers that have hampered international communication and retarded progress, for we have learned that the democratic road is the most effective means to remove physical borders and to establish a world in which genuine interdependence will dominate over narrow-minded chauvinism; where confrontation will make way for tolerance and dialogue; and where cultural and social differences will not discourage cooperation to overcome ethnicity and senseless rivalry.

Thus through the unconquerable determination of the Surinamese people to choose constitutional democracy, we expressed an important goal of our foreign policy, namely to improve and deepen relations with other nations. It is in this context that we attach great importance to internal and external provisions for the promotion and protection of democracy in each country of

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every continent. Within the shortest possible time, therefore, the Constitution will be amended, making it a better reflection of the will and aspirations of our people with regard to the supreme role of the civil authority.

But a democratic society must be safeguarded; it requires, among other things, a sound economic base and the support of other democratic nations. We must, therefore, consider all suggestions made to organize regional mechanisms which would assist vulnerable emerging democratic countries in defending democracy whenever the need arises, with due adherence to the principle of self-determination.

To adapt our economy to changing international realities, and thus secure the basis for sound economic growth and safeguard the principle of social justice, my Government is committed to realizing a multidimensional adjustment and recovery programme. The solution to the dilemma that arises from the conflicting priorities of adjustment and stability, necessitates a prudent approach, while international support is indispensable. To this end my Government will shortly enter into dialogue with friendly nations inside and outside our region.

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Mr. President, my delegation is pleased to see you, a representative of Saudi Arabia, a country with which Suriname enjoys friendly relations and cultural ties, presiding over the proceedings of the General Assembly. You bring to this office a wealth of diplomatic experience and skill. We wish you every success in the performance of your task and offer our unswerving support at all times. My delegation would like to convey its gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, for the excellent manner in which he guided the affairs of the forty-fifth session. During his tenure of office the Organization engaged in a process aimed at enhancing the role of the United Nations in international affairs and decision-making and took one of the momentous decisions in its history. We also express appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the excellent manner in which he too carried out his task in the recent turbulent period.

The admission of new nations is completely in conformity with the cherished goal of universality which is enshrined in the Charter of our Organization.

The membership of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will certainly contribute to a peaceful solution of the Korean question and my delegation wholeheartedly welcomes them as full Members of the United Nations.

The Government and people of Suriname also congratulate and welcome the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federal State of Micronesia and we rejoice at the admittance of the Baltic States - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - into the United Nations. Their presence among us today as Members of this Organization is a reflection of sweeping changes that are taking place

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in today's world. The Government of Suriname looks forward to cooperation with all the new Members.

We wish to reconfirm that we will continue to base our relations with other nations on the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of American States and on the principles of the Movement of Non-Aligned States.

Long historical bonds have forged special relationships between Suriname and many other countries. Moreover, there exist special cultural ties with some countries, among them the Netherlands. This relationship is nurtured and strengthened by the relatively large group of Dutch citizens who originate from Suriname, and by the Agreement for Development Cooperation, signed between the Republic of Suriname and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

I expect that my Government, which was chosen by general, free and fair elections, will receive the fullest support and cooperation in realizing its national goals.

Suriname hopes and expects to find a favourable attitude with the Netherlands and among all friendly nations, both within and outside our region. With regard to the Netherlands, the Government of Suriname has declared its preparedness to have further talks in the near future on the possible deepening and extension of relations between the two countries.

Now that the traditional causes of international tension and instability have been removed, practically every country is challenged by a phenomenon so pervasive that it defies national boundaries, so persistent that the fight against it devours many national treasuries and, indeed, so devastating that it threatens to destroy the very essence of civilized man. It is no wonder, therefore, that Suriname, too, is among the victims of the evil and illicit trafficking and use of drugs. No one country alone can win the war against

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the scourge - certainly not small countries with a vulnerable economic base. Decisive and coordinated actions are called for, both at the regional and at the global level.

We have begun, within the limits of our resources, to take action in this regard at the national level. My Government will strengthen our institutional framework and seek the most effective manner in which to contribute to the war against drugs. We have already signed treaties with neighbouring countries for effective cooperation but we are convinced that, with the restoration of democracy in Suriname, we have met one of the basic requirements for expanded and intensified international cooperation.

The signing of the strategic arms reduction agreement by the United States and the Soviet Union constitutes a major step in achieving general and complete disarmament and will certainly contribute to a more stable and peaceful world. The process of arms reduction and disarmament, including the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, should be pursued vigorously. Serious consideration should be given to utilizing the substantial resources released as a result of détente, in a more constructive manner.

We note with much satisfaction that the processes of change in Eastern Europe have retained their dynamics. These processes, which are taking place with great difficulty, have our full support and sympathy. We are glad that the threat to the democratic forces in the USSR by means of a coup d'état, was of but short duration. We commend the Soviet people for their courage, which was undoubtedly the decisive factor.

We had sincerely hoped that after the rapprochement of the super-Powers, the world in general, and Europe in particular, would have entered an era of

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peace and security. The ethnic confrontation taking place in Eastern Europe, however, fills us with deepest anxiety. We therefore call upon the parties involved to seek a solution for their differences by means of dialogue and not by force of arms.

One of the fundamental causes of instability in the Middle East is the unresolved Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue. My Government notes with appreciation the efforts made by the Government of the United States to promote the convening of a peace conference. We hold the view that a just and comprehensive solution is not possible without taking into account the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We support the right to security of all States of the region, including the State of Israel.

The positive changes taking place in South Africa are a source of hope and my Government welcomes the repeal of the main legislative principles of the apartheid system. However, pressure should be maintained until a democratic constitution has been established and all conditions as stipulated by the United Nations Declaration on South Africa have been met.

The development strategies of the 1970s and 1980s showed both their merits and their defects. Significant economic and social progress was made, particularly with respect to improving living conditions. However, millions of people in the world continue to live in poverty and ignorance, endure hunger, suffer from diseases, and die at an early age. The pressure of population growth over the next 10 years as well as the social side-effects of global restructuring will most certainly add to the existing problems of the developing countries. This paints a gloomy picture and in today's increasingly interdependent world, developed and developing countries have to address the needs of the people in a spirit of shared responsibility.

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The challenge of combating backwardness, alleviating poverty and redressing social inequalities should be tackled through global cooperation. In this respect it should be noted that, fortunately, the emphasis at present is focused on human development and areas like primary education, preventive health care and housing.

International cooperation for development has now reached another phase. We have learned from experience, and in this respect a new approach is being taken by the developing countries. This was reflected in the adoption of the agreed objectives of the Fourth International Development Strategy and in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation.

But it is disappointing that thus far little progress has been made to achieve the objectives agreed upon during the negotiations of the relevant United Nations initiatives. Problems such as the external debt, reverse transfer of resources from developing to industrialized countries, and new forms of protectionism still constitute serious constraints in the development process. It should be noted, however, that despite these setbacks, the concept of development has given way to new perceptions which advocate greater cooperation for development and are geared towards shouldering of more responsibilities by the developing countries.

We support the views expressed in the report of the South Commission that the developing countries should rely increasingly on their own resources and efforts for economic development, without isolating themselves from the North. Therefore, we should promote South-South cooperation and encourage all efforts to strengthen our collective self-reliance as a matter of priority.

My Government underlines the South Commission's six-point global programme of immediate action and urges that in the near future serious

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consideration be given to convening a global summit meeting to discuss the objectives stated in the South report with the leaders of the North.

Since the establishment of the United Nations, it has had to cope with many challenges, uncertainties and frustrations, but has also experienced success and achievements in many fields. Recent events have focused attention once more on the role and functioning of the Organization. The Gulf war has demonstrated that the United Nations is able to take decisive action to repel aggression and restore international peace and security. We hold the view that in future the effectiveness of the Organization could be augmented even more. To that end, the Security Council should act with the same vigour and unanimity, whenever international peace and security are in jeopardy, that it demonstrated during the Gulf war.

In this respect, my Government concurs with the view, recently underlined by the Secretary-General, that there should be a proper balance between the powers, prerogatives and responsibilities of the five permanent members of the Security Council and those of the 10 non-permanent members and between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

In the first part of this year the General Assembly devoted considerable attention to finding ways and means to improve the functioning of the intergovernmental machinery in the economic and social fields of our Organization. My Government is of the opinion that the current process of reform should be continued, with the aim of enhancing the principle of democracy in the decision-making process of the United Nations. As the Group of 77 has stressed time and again, clarity and openness must be preserved and strengthened; only then will the United Nations system be able to become more responsive and accountable to all Member States.

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We are moving towards the year 1992, which will be a year of special significance for the world. It will give us the opportunity to reflect on the time-span of 500 years of development which has passed since the first encounter of two continents. The year 1992 will also mark the beginning of new challenges and opportunities for present and future generations. Europe is setting course for a fully integrated economic system. At the same time, other regions too are moving towards strengthening their economic integration.

However, the unifying process in Western Europe has been accompanied by concern on the part of the developing countries, particularly the African, Caribbean and Pacific (APC) countries, which have developed a close economic exchange with Europe throughout the years. The fear that this process will cause severe suffering for these countries is related to the fact that they cannot risk any further imbalances in their current economic situation. Due consideration should be given to their established legitimate interests.

A United Europe after 1992 might indeed widen the gap between North and South, but it could also deepen the awareness of the countries of the world, both rich and poor, of their ever-increasing interdependence, which should strengthen their sense of mutual responsibility. In this respect, we express our sincere hope that the Uruguay Round, which will offer a solid basis for constructive cooperation in the field of multilateral trade negotiations, will be brought to a successful end.

We should approach in the same spirit the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, scheduled to be held in Rio de Janiero, Brazil, which will be a critical landmark in the history of the world. As the underlying causes of the environmental deterioration are being identified and the preparedness to combat them has become a priority on the international

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agenda, the need to take effective measures to achieve sustainable development is a matter of great urgency. The transfer of new and additional resources to finance environmental programmes in the developing countries, as well as environmentally sound and efficient technologies, is imperative. Suriname is looking forward to this important undertaking of the United Nations next year, which should offer the world a new framework for rights and obligations to be shared by mankind in the interest of the future of the entire world.

We have noted that the universal mood for democratic change is irrevocable and basic to any degree of economic progress and social justice. Failure to utilize this momentum to solve the most serious problems that afflict mankind and continue to dominate our agenda will take us to another age of despair. But the new respect and expanded role that our Organization has gained justifies our confidence and optimism. The Republic of Suriname is ready to take its share of the burden and make its contribution to steady and lasting progress in the world.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Suriname for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. SOLANKI (India): I have great pleasure in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. I am confident that your wise leadership will enable this session to deal successfully with the broad agenda before it. You may count on my delegation's cooperation in the discharge of your onerous responsibilities.

I would like to record my appreciation for the energetic and imaginative presidency of your predecessor, Ambassador Guido de Marco of Malta.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Perez de Cuellar, who has served the international community at a critical turning-point in modern history, deserves our deep gratitude and unstinting admiration. His indefatigable energy, dedication, diligence, imagination and resourcefulness have enabled the United Nations to play a pivotal role in the resolution of many crisis situations.

I am delighted to welcome in our midst the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. India enjoys excellent relations with both and trusts that their admission to the United Nations will further contribute to dialogue and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula. This would also enable them to contribute more effectively to the strengthening of peace and security in the region and in the world at large. We are happy that the Baltic Republics - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - have taken their rightful place in the Organization. Similarly, I should like to congratulate the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands on their admission to the United Nations.

(Mr. Solanki, India)

In the year that has elapsed since the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, India and the world lost a distinguished statesman in the person of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India. Rajiv Gandhi's commitment and dedication to the cause of peace and international understanding naturally made him an extremely ardent supporter of the United Nations. He firmly believed that the Organization, where the entire international community is represented, offers an ideal forum to tackle the manifold problems facing mankind: eradication of poverty, disarmament, environmental conservation, elimination of the menace of drugs and so on. He was particularly concerned about the threat of total annihilation posed by nuclear arsenals, and he will long be remembered for the Action Plan for a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world that he presented to the special session on disarmament in 1988.

The recent dramatic changes in the world have led to a restructuring of international relations. After decades of the cold war, there is a move towards dialogue to replace confrontation, trust to replace suspicion and, above all, peace and cooperation to replace strife and discord. Democracy is taking root in the Eastern European countries, which are, at the same time, making efforts to integrate into the world economy. The process of change in the Soviet Union, initiated by President Gorbachev's policies of perestroika and glasnost, has received further momentum recently. Elsewhere in the world, too, there is evidence of the successful assertion of the democratic aspirations of the people. In our own region, there are the shining examples of Bangladesh and Nepal. As the Secretary-General has aptly put it in his report on the work of the the Organization:

> "Today there are far more solid grounds for hope than there are reasons for frustration and fear." (A/46/1, p. 22)

(Mr. Solanki, India)

While welcoming these positive changes, we cannot but be aware of the formidable obstacles we still face in the creation of an equitable and just world order. Glaring inequalities continue to plague our planet. Disparities among countries and groups of countries have not only persisted, but have also widened. If the promise of a restructured framework for international relations is to be realized, it must address the interests of all and must be accepted by all.

India was among the first to speak out, several decades ago, against the division of the world into hostile camps. The policy of non-alignment, embraced by most of the newly independent nations, stressed the right of nations to determine their own destinies. The Non-Aligned Movement called upon the super-Powers not only to end their rivalry but also to work in cooperation for the benefit of the world. The present situation, marked by the disappearance of bloc rivalries and their replacement by increasing cooperation among major Powers, is a vindication of the Movement's basic plank. As the recent meeting of the Ministers of the non-aligned countries in Accra declared, the Movement will continue to be an important factor in international relations by pursuing the goal of establishing a society based on social, economic and political justice through dialogue and cooperation.

The relaxation of tensions in international relations has inevitably led to progress in the resolution of a number of crisis situations. In Central America, Nicaragua and El Salvador have ceased to be arenas of conflict and tension. Peace has dawned in Angola with the signing of an accord between the parties concerned. Cambodia is on the verge of a negotiated solution. Cyprus and Afghanistan also seem to be moving towards a peaceful settlement. In Western Sahara, a referendum sponsored by the United Nations is about to be held, ending decades of acrimony and conflict in the region.

(Mr. Solanki, India)

The crucial role that the United Nations has started to play in these and other crisis situations is in keeping with its original mandate. The convergence of the objectives of the permanent members of the Security Council has led to a consensus among them on several issues, as envisaged in 1945. The United Nations, at the same time, needs to be strengthened and reformed in order to live up to the expectations placed in it.

(Mr. Solanki, India)

In this connection, one of the challenges faced by the United Nations today is to make it truly representative of the interests and aspirations of all its Members and to make it an arena of cooperative action of all nations and peoples.

As the Non-Aligned Movement has recently reiterated, the current efforts at reform of the United Nations should include measures designed to make the decision-making process at the United Nations, particularly in the Security Council, more democratic and transparent. In this context, we should examine, as a matter of urgency, the proposals before us for an expansion of the Security Council to reflect the increased membership of the United Nations and to ensure a more equitable and balanced representation of the Members of the United Nations in the Council.

This year has seen the conclusion of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), an outstanding achievement in the field of nuclear disarmament. For the first time in history, there is going to be real reduction in the strategic nuclear forces of the United States and the Soviet Union. This has been long overdue, but there is no reason to be complacent. The process of reduction of nuclear weapons must continue. The START reductions are very limited and are confined to numbers, without any effect on the quality of these weapons. The reductions should now be deeper, quicker and should involve all the nuclear-weapon States. The Treaty should not lead to qualitative upgrading of the remaining arsenals, nor should the warheads released be reused in other systems.

Nuclear weapons have no place in today's world and with the end of the cold war the irrelevance of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence stands further exposed. Unfortunately, new theories of deterrence are being developed in

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order to legitimize the continued possession and improvement of nuclear weapons. Deterrence is now being conceived either in the balance-of-power context or against the so-called delinquent powers among developing countries.

The action plan proposed by India at the third special session on disarmament in 1988 assumes increased relevance today. The present is the opportune moment to commence work for a new treaty to give legal effect to a binding commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework, and by all non-nuclear-weapon States not to cross the nuclear threshold. The implementation of the action plan could also help in ending the unnatural division of the world into nuclear "haves" and "have-nots" and the need to erect all kinds of discriminatory ad hoc regimes to sustain such a division.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty symbolizes this division. India has not accepted the Treaty because it does not impose reciprocal obligations on the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the Treaty enforces inequitable full-scale safeguards on all the nuclear activities of the non-nuclear-weapon States without imposing commensurate obligations on the nuclear-weapon States.

Nevertheless, I should like to state that, even without having signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, India has scrupulously adhered to a non-proliferation policy and has never helped any other nation in developing nuclear weapons. We shall continue to abide by such a policy.

We also have our best opportunity in the coming year to conclude a global convention banning chemical weapons. India is committed to working along with all those delegations that wish to complete the work on a draft chemical-weapons convention within the stipulated time frame. What remains to

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be done in the field of verification, compliance and consultative mechanism should be accomplished without further delay through common effort and understanding. We should all realize that the greater good of humanity is at stake in the abolition of chemical weapons and this good should not be compromised for lesser, short-term ends.

The Gulf crisis earlier this year underscored the inadmissibility of aggression by one country against another. Like the rest of the international community, we feel gratified that aggression has been reversed. We rejoice that Kuwait is once again a sovereign independent State. The Gulf region has long been a focal point of tension and instability. This region is our neighbour, and we are hopeful and confident that, following the recent crisis, there will be peace and stability in the region.

As a member of the Security Council since January of this year, India has tried to play a constructive role in the Council's effort to deal with the Gulf crisis. We lent support to all endeavours to secure the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait without resorting to war. Once the war started, we combined our efforts with those of like-minded countries to bring it to a speedy end and, in any case, to ensure that the destruction and devastation unleashed by the war remained limited. We also tried to assert the Security Council's role in guiding the course of the war and in calling for a cease-fire. Being conscious throughout of the humanitarian aspects of the crisis, we made a number of proposals in the Council to provide succour to the innocent civilian victims of the conflict.

The Gulf crisis and the ensuing war severely damaged the economies of many countries, including my own. Nevertheless, we remained in step with the international community in imposing comprehensive sanctions. The Gulf crisis demonstrated that in the present era of global economic interdependence, the

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imposition of sanctions in a region, particularly when that region happens to be a major source of the energy supply, is bound to have an adverse effect on the economies of a large number of other countries both within and outside the region.

Our experience of invoking Article 50 of the Charter to seek redress was, to say the least, both frustrating and disappointing. The consideration of our case took place after long delays and it resulted only in a call on Member States and United Nations specialised agencies to give attention to our problems. A lesson that we should draw from this experience is that, in future, a mechanism should be devised for the automatic commencement of action under Article 50 in the event of the imposition of sanctions. As the Secretary-General stated in his report on the work of the Organization: "In today's conditions of economic interdependence, the effect of the imposition of comprehensive economic sanctions on third States that are economic partners of the offender State requires that Article 50 of the Charter be supplemented by appropriate arrangements creating obligations to assist concretely the disadvantaged third State or States". (A/46/1, p.6)

The Gulf region still suffers from the aftermath of war. The United Nations has the duty and responsibility to exert all its energies to remove the suffering, hunger and squalor left behind by the war. This is particularly true of the Iraqi civilian population, whose misery is not lightened by the continuation of economic and trade sanctions. We commend the humanitarian assistance provided to the people of the region by Member countries as well as United Nations agencies. At the same time, we believe that any outside intervention in a Member country on humanitarian grounds constitutes an abridgement of national sovereignty and is, therefore, fraught with serious implications.

(Mr. Solanki, India)

We sincerely hope that the flexibility shown by all parties concerned will help to resolve the Middle East conflict, at the core of which is the Palestinian question. India applauds the assiduousness with which the United States has worked to get the various parties involved to the negotiating table. I trust that these efforts, along with those of the parties concerned, will mark a beginning in the resolution of the vexed Middle East problem. We believe that a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East question will be possible and durable only if it restores to the Palestinian people their fundamental rights, including their right to a homeland.

(Mr. Solanki, India)

I mentioned Cambodia earlier. Events there are shaping towards what we hope will be a peaceful resolution of the conflict. We specially welcome the Cambodian delegation to the United Nations, led by His Royal Highness Prince Sihanouk, Chairman of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia, which has recently taken several initiatives in bringing Cambodia closer to an era of peace and restoration.

India appreciates the contribution made by the five permanent members of the Security Council and the Paris International Conference on Cambodia towards resolving this long-drawn-out problem. We are glad to be associated with this process as a member of the Paris International Conference. The Cambodian people, who have suffered so much in the past, deserve the continued support of the international community to complete the badly needed process of national reconciliation and reconstruction. We look forward to the emergence of Cambodia as a sovereign, independent, neutral and non-aligned nation in accordance with the wishes of its people.

I trust that the Secretary-General's five-point plan on Afghanistan will inspire the parties to the conflict to negotiate a framework for resolving this issue. We welcome the decision by the United States and the Soviet Union not to supply arms to the parties involved, but this step will be effective only if supplies from other sources also stop forthwith. The United States has a major role to play in this regard. We call for a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan which would preserve the sovereign, non-aligned and independent status of Afghanistan.

Of late, further movement in dealing with the Cyprus issue is discernible. India supports peace efforts that ensure the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Cyprus, and in this light welcomes further negotiations under United Nations auspices.

(Mr. Solanki, India)

Myanmar remains deprived of the democratic rights its own people voted for over three years ago. India calls upon the Myanmar leadership to accept the people's verdict and work with them to restore democracy in the country.

The South African Government has recently undertaken a number of positive steps towards dismantling the apartheid regime. We welcome these changes. At the same time, we remain fully aware that a lot more needs to be done. The South African authorities must immediately take all necessary measures to start the process of negotiations. Equally important is curbing the continuing violence in certain parts of the country. The pressure that has been brought to bear on Pretoria by the application of sanctions has proved to be useful and must be sustained. The international community must remain vigilant until the complete eradication of apartheid and the transformation of South Africa into a non-racial, unitary democracy.

While apartheid is on the retreat in South Africa, an attempt is being made to institutionalize racism in Fiji. The interim government in Fiji has incorporated into a new constitution certain provisions which are in violation of the internationally accepted principles of democracy and human rights. By institutionalizing oppression and injustice, Fiji appears to be moving backwards in history to a darker age. The Suva regime should abandon such anachronistic policies and join the rest of the world in enlightened democratic governance.

In the economic field, there is an increasing trend of integration of the process of production, consumption and trade in the world economy, brought about mainly by the communications revolution. This has led to an unprecedented enhancement of the interdependence of nations and increasing competitiveness among major operators in the world economy. One of the very

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significant outcomes of this phenomenon has been the creation and strengthening of regional economic groupings, particularly among developed countries. Western Europe is moving towards an integrated market by the end of 1992. The former East and West Germanys have been united. In a few years Germany is expected to emerge as an even stronger economic Power. While these are significant economic changes, we do not see concommitant moves towards meaningfully addressing North-South development issues.

Responding to the changing realities, many developing countries are making strenuous efforts to carry out structural changes in order to meet the challenges. We in India have also introduced far-reaching changes in our industrial, trade and monetary and fiscal policies. Our aim is to remove unnecessary controls and regulations so as to release the creative forces in the economy and realize its full potential. As a consequence of these policy changes, we envisage sharply increased interlinkages with the world economy. We need the understanding and cooperation of our partners from developed countries to derive the full benefits from the measures we have adopted and as a cushion against the short-run pressures that may build up. We also need an international economic environment which is conducive to ensuring the success of such measures. In various multilateral organizations, it will be our endeavour to work towards establishing an international economic order which is truly multilateral and based on the principle of non-discrimination and the rule of law.

The overall external economic environment for developing countries remains unfavourable. Many of these countries are facing the problem of worsening terms of trade, increasing problems in finding access to advanced technology, and reductions in the resources available for development.

(Mr. Solanki, India)

The overall debt situation for the developing countries has assumed alarming proportions and poses a serious threat to their economic viability. A solution to the developing countries' debt problem would need a comprehensive and integrated strategy encompassing all categories of affected countries and all forms of debt.

Against this backdrop, the Secretary-General's proposal for an international conference on the financing of development deserves support. As he further points out in his report on the work of the Organization:

> "A reinvigoration of the North-South dialogue has now become more urgent than ever. Fortunately, conditions exist now for advancing it constructively without a needless overlay of rhetoric or ideological controversy." (A/46/1, p. 12)

India attaches great importance to an early, successful and balanced outcome of the current Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations. We are a serious partner in these negotiations, which we approach with an open mind and a considerable degree of flexibility. But we have our own concerns to be met and interests to safeguard. That is why we have been insisting that the overall package that emerges from these negotiations must contain specific and time-bound commitments on issues of concern to developing countries.

The developments of recent years have further validated the disarmament and development linkage and made it a reality. National budgetary policies of some of the major military Powers already provide for the channelling of resources now locked into the arms race into economic growth. The peace dividend now needs to be realized at the international level. The International Conference on Disarmament and Development envisaged mechanisms in this regard which should be put into effect.

(Mr. Solanki, India)

We notice another disturbing trend in the economic field. Attempts are being made to factor into the calculus of international and bilateral economic cooperation, non-economic considerations such as good governance, observance of human rights, environment, military expenditure, and so on. The Indian polity is firmly anchored on political pluralism and individual freedom. We attach high priority to the preservation of the environment and would very much like to reduce our military budget. But these laudable goals should apply to all countries, developed and developing. What is questionable is the linkage of these issues with development assistance of which only the developing countries are the recipients.

Environmental concerns are fast moving to the top of the world agenda and are rightly at the forefront of international concern and attention. We are convinced that environmental problems cannot be isolated from the general issue of development and must be viewed as an integral part of development efforts. For global environmental problems to be dealt with effectively, we need to forge a global partnership which seeks to protect the environment while simultaneously addressing the development requirements of the developing countries.

It is well recognized that the principal sources of pollutants in the environment lie in the developed countries and these countries accordingly bear the main responsibility for combating such pollution. Furthermore, if financial, technical and other capabilities are also taken into account, then it becomes quite clear that the responsibility for undertaking corrective action devolves on the developed countries. Without the provision of adequate, new and additional financial resources and environmentally benign technologies on preferential and non-commercial terms, it would be difficult for the developing countries to adopt environmentally safe and desirable

(Mr. Solanki, India)

technologies, much as they would like to do so. Such technologies should not become simply another source of commercial profit for the developed world.

India will continue its constructive contribution to the preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. We hope that at the Conference the twin issues of environment and development will be addressed in a balanced way and in their totality.

India is glad to see changes around the world that serve to strengthen fundamental human rights. India's own deep commitment to human rights, true to its democratic traditions and practices, is well known. India's parliamentary institutions, independent judiciary, free press and public opinion provide the necessary checks and balances to safeguard individual as well as collective human rights. I would, however, urge caution in projecting the promotion of human rights in an intrusive manner that militates against national sovereignty. Contexts and situations differ from country to country, and international concern for human rights preservation should not detract from the efforts in the same direction made by the country concerned.

In recent years, terrorism has emerged as one of the most dangerous and pernicious threats to the enjoyment of human rights, peace and stability in many parts of the world. Through killings, kidnappings, extortion and other such means, terrorists and their organizations have effectively usurped the basic human rights of innocent civilians. In a number of cases, they are using brutality and fear to undermine the free functioning of democratic institutions, including the legislative, executive and judiciary branches of government, as well as the press. Such terrorism assumes a particularly pernicious form when it is aided, abetted and sponsored from abroad. Sponsorship of terrorism in another country constitutes a violation of the principles governing relations among States which have been enshrined in the

(Mr. Solanki, India)

United Nations Charter. This deserves the condemnation of the international community.

Drug abuse control has gained a commendable measure of global co-operation. Drug abuse is a menace calling for concerted and strong action. India welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Global Programme of Action for international drug control. We would stress the need for additional financial resources and technical assistance for crop substitution and other measures to combat drug trafficking and abuse.

In conclusion, let me say that we in India wish the recent epochal changes worldwide to be the harbingers of peace, prosperity and an equitable and just world order. The logic of progress is on the side of those who think and act progressively, not of those who wish to remain frozen in an unresponsive status quo. India looks forward to cooperating with other nations in the noble endeavour of strengthening world peace and cooperation.

Mr. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea, it is my pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the important post of President of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

As you are aware, Papua New Guinea's Foreign Minister, Sir Michael Somare, was a candidate for the presidency of this session of the General Assembly. As a democratic country whose Constitution is based on United Nations principles and practices, we of course accept the collective decision of this body in electing you as its President. We pledge ourselves to working with you during your term of office with much pleasure and gratitude. On the basis of the principle of shared responsibility, we intend

(Mr. Samana, Papua New Guinea)

to maintain our strong commitment to the United Nations. We will continue to make our modest contribution to the work of the world's highest body.

Allow me to place on record Papua New Guinea's appreciation for the excellent job accomplished by your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta. Among his pressing responsibilities, he has been instrumental in the ongoing reform exercises at the United Nations, and my delegation commends his contribution to that important development.

Papua New Guinea's commitment to the United Nations is rooted in our Constitution, which establishes a democratic system of government and protects the basic rights and fundamental freedoms of the individual within the framework of society. Our national Constitution provides for due process of law to ensure that personal liberties are protected by impartial and independent courts of law. Within our constitutional framework, we have established an extensive and working legal system of checks and balances to ensure that executive government is fully accountable to its people.

The fundamental provisions of our Constitution embody the ideals and values of democracy, more conducive within our Melanesian practices of consensus in democratic decision-making. We support the processes of democratization now under way throughout the international community.

Papua New Guinea welcomes the new Members to the United Nations. Their membership is a clear indication of their support for the increasing importance of the United Nations. We join other delegations in congratulating and welcoming the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as new Members of the United Nations. We also congratulate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Korea and the Republic of the Marshall Islands for their admission as full Members.

(Mr. Samana, Papua New Guinea)

This is indeed an event of historic importance for the Governments and peoples of those States, and we join them in celebrating this important and unique occasion. My delegation is particularly proud to witness the admission of two members of the South Pacific Forum, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, because we have contributed towards the process of self-determination and independence for both those island States. We are pleased that the aspirations of their peoples have been realized.

(Mr. Samana, Papua New Guinea)

Papua New Guinea firmly believes also that the admission of the two Koreas as members of the international community is a significant development in the region. It is our sincere hope that their admission to the United Nations will accelerate and provide an additional avenue for dialogue in the reunification process.

The Assembly convenes at a time of rapid change in the global political, economic and social arenas. It is also a period when there is ever-increasing concern for the future destiny of our global environment. These developments have placed the international community in a more precarious position than ever before. Therefore it is vital that this Assembly continue to play a leading role in finding solutions concerning these challenges. In this regard, we welcome the reform exercise that is currently being pursued at the United Nations to improve its effectiveness.

The achievements over the years of the United Nations system are commendable, particularly in the areas of decolonization, disarmament, the environment, social justice and the maintenance of world peace and security. My delegation highly commends the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for his strenuous efforts in upholding the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. We strongly believe that a strengthened United Nations system is necessary so that it can play a pivotal role in promoting peace and security as well as equitable economic relations between developed and developing countries. Papua New Guinea, since its accession to independence in 1975 and its subsequent admission to membership to the United Nations, has played and will continue to play its part consistent with the underlying principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

(Mr. Samana, Papua New Guinea)

We are encouraged by the positive changes in relations between nations. The marked improvement in East-West relations, particularly between the super-Powers, and their combined efforts to find solutions on many of the global issues bring hope and optimism to international cooperation.

While we were alarmed at the recent developments in the Soviet Union, we are, however, pleased to note the positive developments that are currently taking place in that country. It is our hope that that great country will, through negotiations and dialogue, find solutions to its current difficulties and continue to contribute to international cooperation and development.

Our region, the South Pacific, is relatively free of major conflicts and tensions. Nevertheless, we are not immune from the effects of external problems elsewhere. The South Pacific Community is comprised of many small island States scattered throughout the vast South Pacific. We largely depend on a limited number of agricultural and marine products for our livelihood and export income. Our struggle is, therefore, one of survival.

While we welcome positive contributions towards the overall development of our region, we also believe that external efforts in this development process should not lead to situations that would threaten our environment, our limited resources and in particular our livelihood.

For these reasons, the South Pacific Forum initiated and concluded a number of important arrangements to safeguard our region and our resources. These arrangements include the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty, the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Natural Resources and Environment and the Convention for the Prohibition of Drift-net Fishing in the South Pacific.

(Mr. Samana, Papua New Guinea)

Last year marked the thirtieth anniversary of the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. It is also the desire of the United Nations to ensure total eradication of colonialism by the year 2000. Even though the struggle against colonialism has been largely successful, our region still places great importance on the emancipation of the remaining colonial Territories and their peoples around the world, including those in the South Pacific.

My country remains committed to the work of the Special Committee on decolonization to ensure that the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism is effectively implemented.

My delegation is particularly encouraged by the measures being taken in New Caledonia by the French authorities under the Matignon Accords, in cooperation with all sectors of the population, to promote equitable political, economic and social development in order to provide a framework for that Territory's peaceful evolution to self-determination and independence.

We welcome the willingness of the French Government to allow a South Pacific Forum ministerial visiting mission to New Caledonia this year. Likewise, we further seek the cooperation of the French authorities to facilitate regular visits to New Caledonia by visiting missions of the United Nations to monitor the developments in that Territory.

My Government believes that in order to facilitate smooth transition to self-determination and independence, the Administering Authority must enhance opportunities for assistance in education and training, especially for the Kanaks of New Caledonia. There are other dependent Territories in the region which must also be given opportunities by the Administering Authorities concerned to achieve self-determination.

(Mr. Samana, Papua New Guinea)

More than ever before, the environment-related issues have increasingly occupied an important place on the agenda of the United Nations, as well as being of concern to individual countries and regions. The continuing deterioration of our global environment is a matter of grave concern to all of us. If this trend is allowed to continue unchecked, it will most certainly disrupt the global ecological balance and jeopardize the Earth's life-sustaining capacities.

We in the South Pacific are alarmed at the changing global climatic conditions which threaten present and future generations with untold economic and social consequences. Therefore we appeal to the world community to consider with the utmost seriousness how we can control global patterns of production and consumption, to avoid the degradation of the global life-support systems.

The global warming and climatic changes which are causing rising sea-levels are a direct threat to the very survival of the small island States. In this regard, we commend the efforts of the Association of Small Island States to seek the cooperation of the international community to develop a framework convention on climate change.

We firmly believe that international cooperation in the field of environmental protection calls for a global multilateral approach so that all aspects of the issue can be considered, while, at the same time, the development priorities of developing countries are retained.

We are pleased with the progress being made towards the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in June 1992. My Government looks forward to constructive and meaningful

(Mr. Samana, Papua New Guinea)

contributions by participants to ensure that we take collective measures to protect and preserve our global environment.

Papua New Guinea will continue to work with other member States of the South Pacific Forum in opposing nuclear testing and the dumping of nuclear and other toxic wastes in our region.

We appeal to the international community to conform to standards prescribed under the London Convention on Dumping as well as the regional safeguard arrangements to which I have referred earlier. These arrangements are important to us for the protection and survival of our region and our people.

My delegation is, however, concerned that, despite long-standing opposition by the South Pacific Forum, France continues to carry out its nuclear testing activities in the region. We strongly urge France to consider seriously our concern and take positive measures to put an end to this act of terrorism against the ecosystem and humanity.

In this connection, Papua New Guinea welcomes the decision by the Government of the United States to cease the operation of its chemical-weapon incineration facility at Johnston Atoll.

Japan's recent decision to cease drift-net fishing in our waters is also applauded, and we hope other distant-water fishing nations can make similar declarations soon.

Lasting solutions for some of the current conflicts around the globe constitute the only prerequisite to international peace, security and development.

Papua New Guinea welcomes the acceptance by all parties of the framework agreement for a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian conflict.

(Mr. Samana, Papua New Guinea)

My Government believes that the continued involvement of the United Nations is necessary in order to ensure the peaceful resolution of the Cambodian problem. By way of a modest contribution, I am pleased to confirm that Papua New Guinea is prepared to participate in any United Nations peace-keeping arrangements in Cambodia.

My delegation commends the efforts of the United Nations in working towards a peaceful resolution of the question of Western Sahara in line with the appropriate resolutions of the Security Council. We are, however, disappointed that progress is being impeded owing to the current problems in Western Sahara. We are hopeful that the participating parties will allow dialogue and reconciliation to continue and enable the Sahraouis to determine their own future destiny.

The impasse in the search for a solution in regard to the Middle East question continues to concern my Government. We have always maintained that the Palestinians have a right to a homeland as much as Israel has a right to exist within secured borders. We believe these two conditions are fundamental to any lasting solution of the problem.*

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* Mr. Carias Zapata (Honduras), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Samana, Papua New Guinea)

Papua New Guinea has, on many occasions, voiced its concern over the institutionalized apartheid system that exists in South Africa. The latest developments in that country are encouraging, and further steps should be taken to accelerate the process of totally dismantling apartheid in all its forms. We acknowledge the pressure exerted by the international community against the racist South African regime, particularly through the adoption of appropriate United Nations General Assembly resolutions and the sustained dialogue between the various political groups in that country. My Government firmly believes that the final eradication of apartheid and an improvement in relations between South Africa and the neighbouring front-line States, as well as the return of the country to a united, non-racial and democratic system, would provide peace and security in the entire region. It is our firm conviction that sanctions should be continued until the apartheid system is completely dismantled. This institutionalized racism, under apartheid, is indeed a crime against humanity.

The universality of membership of the United Nations is an important objective of the international community. The realization of social justice and equity for all the peoples of the world must be given equal priority by the world community. The United Nations must therefore place people at the centre of all its activities concerning world peace and security. There is a need for all Member States and international civil servants to make every effort to humanize the institutions of the United Nations system so that they may efficiently and effectively contribute to the improvement of the social conditions of the masses of suffering people throughout the world.

The social and political evils of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, drug abuse, and inequality between men and women and between States are still

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prevalent. In this regard, my delegation would like to appeal to all Member States to lend their support for the proposed world summit for social development, which was endorsed at the session of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva this year.

There are many changes taking place in the world economy. We observe, however, that these changes in international economic relations have not brought about any fundamental change in the unfair international economic order. The situations regarding external debt, economic growth and the reverse flow of capital remain unchanged.

The shift by Eastern European countries towards market-oriented economies, the move towards a single European market, and regional initiatives such as Asia-Pacific economic cooperation can have serious consequences for the developing countries.

These problem have been further compounded by continuing global economic recession, inflation, high interest rates, rising unemployment, lack of investment, slow growth and protectionism. All these factors contribute to slow progress and to the stagnation that has a considerable effect on the social and economic well-being of developing countries in particular.

We believe that developing countries are deprived of the opportunity to take advantage of the new technological revolution, which has promoted the internationalization of production and finance and has given a new impetus to the growing integration of the world economy. It therefore appears evident that disparities between the developed and the developing countries will continue to grow if the underlying problems are not adequately addressed with a view to enhancing and promoting equitable trade and economic cooperation between the developed and the developing countries.

(Mr. Samana, Papua New Guinea)

My Government wishes to appeal to the international community to recognise that it is of vital importance that in the ongoing Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations the multilateral trading system should be fully responsive to the special needs of developing countries, particularly with regard to the consideration of commodity prices and the protection of agro-based and other light industries. We also believe that the Uruguay-Round negotiations should lead to the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement and safeguards based on the basic principle of non-discrimination and on the preservation of the flexibility available to developing countries under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

We in the Pacific depend largely on tropical agricultural export products to raise foreign exchange to meet the needs of our people. We have, however, experienced enormous difficulties as a result of both fluctuating commodity prices and the discriminatory trade policies of some developed nations. In this regard, we join others in the international community in urging all participants in the Uruguay Round to commit themselves to a comprehensive and successful end to the negotiations and to underline the importance of fair trade to all countries.

Papua New Guinea values its relations with the European Economic Community, particularly under the umbrella of the various Lomé Conventions. It is our hope that the current political and economic problems in Eastern Europe and the move towards a single European market in 1992 will not in any way affect the agreed provisions put in place under the Lomé IV Convention. We believe that the diverting of development assistant to Eastern Europe will have a negative effect on the economies of the developing countries.

(Mr. Samana, Papua New Guinea)

Never before has the United Nations enjoyed such widespread support for its efforts, and never before have international civil servants been called upon to help guide so many different peoples to peace, democracy and independence. It is a call to which they have responded with the exceptional talent, experience and dedication that the world has come to expect from them. These tasks are undertaken sometimes at great personal cost to the international civil servants, who have to uproot themselves and their families for the duration of their assignments. Many have been detained and held hostage during the course of their duties. We call on those responsible to release and free them to their important duties and to their families.

As for those who have paid the ultimate price and laid down their lives while working for peace, Papua New Guinea salutes their sacrifice and cherishes their memory. As we move into this session of the General Assembly and towards its probable mandates for more United Nations missions, the independence of the international civil service must be guarded more carefully than has been the case in the past.

In conclusion, we wish to emphasize that the aspirations to world peace, and to fair and just development, cannot be realized without political realism and recognition of the dynamics of international politics where narrow political ends of the most powerful States are pursued. International economic and political structures, as they exist today, promote inequality and imbalances. The United Nations cannot, and must not, be used as a legitimizing tool for powerful States utilizing their military arsenals to achieve their narrow political ends.

The global humanitarian concern for all States Members of the United Nations is to take positive steps to minimize inequality between nations, and

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between different societies and peoples within each State. The prime mission of the United Nations, and the challenge of the 1990s, is to move away from rhetoric and make genuine efforts to evolve economic and political structures at the international level that will support development processes capable of securing and enhancing social and economic justice for all. That is the mission for mankind.

Mr. NIEHAUS QUESADA (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): I take great pleasure in congratulating, on behalf of the delegation of Costa Rica, Ambassador Shihabi on his stewardship of this session of the General Assembly. His proven diplomatic experience is a harbinger of success and the highest standards.

The Secretary-General's work for international peace and security throughout his prolific career has made him worthy of the recognition of all the nations of the world. In the particular case of Central America, his interest in cooperation in the search for solutions to regional crises has resulted in an invaluable contribution that gives us cause for hope. I pay a public tribute of gratitude and express homage to him for his many endeavours at the head of the Secretariat.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

Two centuries ago, there was already talk of the need for a State of nations - a civitas gentium - that would grow until it encompassed all the world's nations. In the United Nations we are approaching that ideal, as is demonstrated by the admission to membership of the Republic of Korea, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, which we are pleased to welcome here. Their presence is a symbol of the new essence of international relations and of the rapid but profound transformation in the world situation. It is proof that the principle of universality has gone beyond rhetoric to become a tangible reality.

Those who conceived and founded the United Nations in the dark aftermath of the Second World War dreamed of a world of peace and security in which this Organization would be the temple of right, the temple of the truth, the temple of brotherhood. But for decades the negative impact of a world situation marked by irrationality and confrontation made United Nations action difficult if not impossible.

Recent developments in the international situation have made spectacular changes in this gloomy picture. Political and ideological blocs are crumbling; democracy and freedom are gaining ground everywhere; and the United Nations is finally playing the role it should always have played.

Certainly, this opens new horizons for material and spiritual progress for mankind. But this is also a time when reflection is of the essence. The Gulf conflict, with all its tragic consequences, was a painful call to attention, and it must not be ignored. Indeed, as this Assembly meets, violence continues in Yugoslavia and El Salvador; Africa continues to suffer

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

hunger; cholera and drug trafficking continue to be a scourge in Latin America; and flagrant violations of human rights continue in numerous States Members of the United Nations. This is a time not for deception, but for soul-searching. How solid is the new world order that is being built on foundations of peace, security and cooperation? To what extent are we States Members of the United Nations contributing effectively to ensuring that there is no going back? Excessive optimism may well make us ignore the facts and forget what remains to be done as we hail our achievements.

The case of Central America is particularly enlightening in that respect. Today there are democratic Governments in all the countries of the region; the war in Nicaragua has ended; and negotiations to resolve the conflicts in El Salvador and Guatemala are achieving tangible results. The process of integration has been strengthened. Panama has become a full partner in Central America's endeavours, and diplomatic relations have recently been established between Guatemala and Belize. For some, the Central American crisis is a closed case.

We do not deny that there has been considerable progress, but it is an illusion to think that the regional conflicts are over. The ongoing situations in Guatemala and El Salvador have roots and consequences that go far beyond their borders. And, as shown by the Secretary-General's important and valuable role in the case of El Salvador, strong backing by the international community is indispensable to a solution of these conflicts. Nor have Nicaragua's problems been resolved by the existence of a freely elected Government; there have been disturbing outbreaks of violence in that sister country, making major support for the strengthening of the country's institutions and democracy imperative. While we Central Americans have

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assumed the leading role in solving our problems, political and economic support from the international community remains indispensable. It is absurd to claim that the crisis has ended so long as solid peace and stable democracy have not extended to all the countries of the isthmus.

As paradoxical as it may seem, our progress towards democracy and peace has had negative repercussions in terms of international cooperation in Central American development efforts. Some may think that the effects of so many years of dictatorship, war and destruction can be erased by political freedom and free elections under international observation. But the opposite is true: in Central America, as in Eastern Europe, cooperation from the developed world is decisive if we are to achieve genuine peace and a strengthened democracy. Prosperity and well-being are the best foundations for democracy, and the developed countries know this better than anyone else. In that connection, Costa Rica has great hopes for the efforts of the Association for Democracy and Development in Central America, a body for strengthening democratic institutions in the region and attracting resources to spur the economic revitalization of our countries through the participation, inter alia, of the members of the Group of 24 and of Latin American countries. We also attach great importance to strengthening the efforts of the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America, born within the United Nations, and to increase substantially development assistance programmes for Central American countries.

It is only logical that Central America should have to do its share, and it is doing so, at the cost of great sacrifice. But for Costa Rica there is one area where progress has been inadequate: disarmament. For more than a

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year, with the backing of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, there have been negotiations among Central American countries on security, arms control and verification. Not having an army, Costa Rica is particularly interested in those issues. Little progress has been made thus far, and we still feel that the size of some regional armed forces is disproportionate to the needs and capabilities of Central America. We firmly believe that the triumph of democracy in all Central American countries should go hand in hand with a change in the perceived role of armies and with a reduction in military budgets. We know that such changes cannot occur overnight, but they will not begin so long as a Central America of freedom does not manifest a clear determination to become also a Central America of comity.

Efforts to move the disarmament process forward, both in Central America and throughout the world, are vital if we are to lower military spending and increase international cooperation for development. In that connection, my delegation welcomes the signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty by the Soviet Union and the United States of America, and wishes to highlight the importance of the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which Costa Rica has recently joined.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

My country also considers that there is an urgent need to give priority to international efforts to reduce the nuclear-arms race to a minimum, to avoid the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to cease all nuclear testing. Priority should also be given to regional and global initiatives on limiting conventional weapons and on international weapons transfers. Costa Rica believes that it is necessary to pay more attention not only to the problem of weapons sales, but also to gifts of arms and military equipment.

The flow of arms, either sold or donated to the third world, only increases the problems of our countries. During the tragic days of the Gulf war it was thought that when it ended strict regulation of this traffic would be established. It proved an empty hope. Arms and military assistance continue to arrive in suffering lands whose inhabitants have drained to the dregs the cup of violence. The third world has shed enough blood. It needs more food and fewer weapons, more doctors and fewer military advisers, more housing and fewer barracks, more access to technology for peace and less to technology for destruction, more scholarships for technical careers and fewer military training courses, more cooperation for economic and social development and fewer resources to kill human beings.

The impetus to achieve disarmament, in all its manifestations, is very much in keeping with the decision of the United Nations to dedicate the last 10 years of this millennium to international law and with the need to build a new world order of peace, security and cooperation, as outlined by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session.

Costa Rica, which depends for its external security on the law of nations, believes that that law should become real and positive, avoiding armed conflict by strengthening preventive measures and machinery to achieve

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

the peaceful settlement of disputes. The new world order should give diplomacy a more important role as an element to prevent conflicts and not merely to resolve them. With this in view, it is necessary to encourage pledges to bring the Organization up to date with the new world realities and strengthen its actions in international relations.

During its 1993 session the Assembly will consider the problem of rebuilding and revitalizing the United Nations. However, it is appropriate to reflect now on some problems that undeniably face the Organization, stemming from the world context in which it was created. For example, in Costa Rica's view we must enhance the role of the General Assembly, where all States have one voice and one vote. The Secretary-General's powers must also be increased. It is appropriate to revise the structure and functions of the Security Council, improve the machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes and strengthen the role of the International Court of Justice, as the court of last resort in disputes between States.

Building a new world order also involves paying more attention to the economic and social problems of the developing countries. It would be regrettable if a North-South confrontation were substituted for the East-West confrontation. Progress in democracy and freedom must be accompanied by a resurgence of new and more realistic approaches to the problems of underdevelopment, external debt, hunger and poverty, which afflict a large number of the States represented in this Hall. The United Nations has a responsibility to ensure that the new world order overcomes the idea of blocs and introduces an order involving global cooperation for the benefit of all mankind.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

Concern for this common destiny is being shown, in an encouraging manner, in the work of the United Nations in preparing for the Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil next year. Costa Rica, which has emphasized the need to establish a new ecological order of international cooperation, is happy to welcome those most valuable efforts. We urge all Member States to cooperate enthusiastically in them and to define priority courses of action to follow up on the results of the Conference.

The problem of the progressive deterioriation of the environment affects everyone. Yet ecological disasters continue increasing in number year after year, dimming our chances of making a reality of our desire to bequeath a healthy planet to our children. In this regard, my delegation considers there is an urgent need for the United Nations to play a more effective role in protecting the environment, raising the level of its bodies connected with the subject and the resources devoted to it. But above all Costa Rica believes it is essential to be more realistic. Threats to international security are no longer restricted to the military field. We must be aware that protecting the environment is an international responsibility and that threats to the environment are a threat to international security. Therefore, the new world order should contain functional, realistic machinery to protect the environment, making development possible without destroying the environment, which guarantees man his future. Brazil '92 offers a unique opportunity - perhaps the last - to reconcile differing interests and work together with vision to save our Earth from being turned into a sterile, uninhabitable rock. We Member States cannot and must not fail to take that opportunity.

With the same idea of a common destiny transcending frontiers, we should deal in the heart of the United Nations with problems of human rights.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

Costa Rica, which has made respect for fundamental human rights an essential principle in everyday life, attaches the utmost importance to the world Conference on the subject planned for 1993, and we are deeply grateful for the honour done us in the acceptance of our offer to host the regional meeting for Latin America and Caribbean of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. We are well aware of the importance of this challenge and we shall spare no effort to ensure that the meeting is successful in every way, as it must be in view of the importance of its purposes. My delegation believes that the Conference will stimulate a strengthening of all the international instruments and mechanisms for protecting human rights and will be a fundamental step forward in ensuring that the twenty-first century is a century of profound respect for inalienable human rights.

In his first address in this Hall, on 7 December 1988, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev said that international relations

> "will fully reflect the genuine interests of the peoples and effectively serve the cause of their common security only when the human being and his concerns, rights and freedoms become the centre of all things."
>
> (A/43/PV.72, p. 23)

That view, which was recently enshrined in the human rights declaration issued in the Soviet Union, should be the cornerstone of the new world order.

The collapse of tyrannies and the progressive weakening of the totalitarian regimes that still insist on swimming against the tide of history have certainly resulted in greater respect for human rights.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

Yet it is discouraging to note that there are still violations of human rights in many areas of the world that require the international community to make much more energetic efforts to put an end to them. Like the case of the environment, the status of human rights can no longer be regarded as the exclusive concern of States.

Nor should the progress achieved in human rights halt further efforts from being made. For example, although the measures taken to eradicate apartheid in the Republic of South Africa have raised our hopes, Costa Rica believes that it is urgent to achieve the total integration of all the population of that country into a true democracy based on the fundamental principle of absolute equality for all men.

Respect for human rights and for international law as a whole is a decisive factor for the attainment of a lasting peace in every country of the world. We Costa Ricans, who for generations have enjoyed the benefits of living in peace, view with dismay the violence that continues to prevail in today's world.

The situation in the Middle East, which decade after decade fills the front pages of our newspapers, is a time-bomb and is incompatible with the ideal of a new order based on true international harmony. Thus, my delegation hopes for the success of efforts being made to bring about a peace conference in the Middle East at which present differences will be discussed and peacefully resolved through reconciliation, with respect for the human rights of all the peoples of the region. There must be a definitive peace in the Middle East. We are confident that it can be achieved and that its peoples will prove themselves worthy of the great spiritual legacies they have

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inherited. The three major religions that have enlightened the world all share ideals of brotherhood and recognize the value of forgiveness and reconciliation.

There is an equally urgent need to reestablish peace in Yugoslavia. Today, as in 1914, the world's attention is focused on the Balkans, and it is neither right nor realistic to ignore the upheavals occurring there and to argue that circumstances have changed and that the spectre of a world conflagration has disappeared. The United Nations cannot ignore the fact that what is happening in that region goes beyond the boundaries of Yugoslavia and poses a threat to all.

The terrible example of the Gulf War is too fresh in our minds for us to maintain that there can be conflicts that are merely local. Wherever breaches of the peace occur, wherever human rights are violated, wherever acts of violence lead to death, destruction and waves of refugees, peace is endangered and the prosperity of all peoples on earth imperilled.*

The world is increasingly coming to realize a better sense of unity. The phenomenon of integration is occurring with increasing force in the most varied parts of the planet, and it lends greater cohesion to the efforts peoples are making to achieve social and economic development. There are many examples in our hemisphere. President Bush's initiative of the Americas, the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), the Tuxtla Gutierrez Accords, the integration efforts of the three countries of North America and the progressive and growing importance of the Andean Pact structures, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Central American Common Market all

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* Mr. Al-Khussaiby (Oman), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Niehaus Quesada, Costa Rica)

demonstrate that the idea of community is becoming ever-more deeply rooted in the soil of America where today - with one exception that we hope will soon cease to be one - democracy and liberty are flourishing and where men hope to build a future based on justice and development.

Costa Rica hopes that the phenomenon now occurring in the Americas will prevail in the twenty-first century throughout the entire world. Costa Rica looks forward to living in a new millenium in a world of conciliation, not confrontation; a world which faces its problems and shares its successes; a world of democracy based on respect for the human person and human rights; a world in which peoples and countries will be brothers and sisters; a world with a shared horizon of development for all.

As the President of Costa Rica, Rafael Angel Calderon Fournier, has stated:

> "Today, mankind looks to the future with optimism and hope. We are moving firmly forward towards the construction of a new world in which the cruelty of war and the intolerance of ideological fanaticism will give way to the irrepressible power of dialogue and to solidarity and cooperation among peoples. We are building a world that will witness the arrival of a new century of democracy. Never before in history has mankind had such an opportunity to achieve its dreams and its ideals."

All States and all men have the opportunity and the responsibility to make those dreams come true, to participate in the building of a new world, a new international order, and the United Nations, as the coordinator of those efforts, as the embodiment of the spirit of brotherhood that should guide mankind, must play the decisive role of designing and building the shining destiny opening up before us. Let us all contribute to making it a reality.

Mr. KRAVCHANKA (Belarus) (interpretation from Russian): I should like first to congratulate the President, the representative of a country that is making a great contribution to the establishment of peace and expanding international cooperation, on his election to preside over the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly and to assure him of my delegation's willingness to give him every assistance in the performance of his important and responsible task.

Our delegation is especially pleased at the admission to membership in our Organization of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, with which we have for centuries enjoyed a tradition of friendly relations. We hope that those will grow stronger and be further enriched.

We also congratulate the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on their admission to membership in the United Nations. We express our willingness to expand cooperation with those countries on a multilateral and bilateral basis.

We welcome the admission to United Nations membership of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

In 1914 Maxim Bogdanovich, the well-known Belarusian poet, whose centenary is this year being celebrated under the aegis of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), wrote the following lines:

(spoke in Belarusian)

"There is such wealth and beauty everywhere,

"Yet men still starve and toil

"In poverty, in ignorance,

"Because of boundaries and barriers."

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

(spoke in Russian)

The poet was expressing concern at man's deepening isolation, at his alienation from the world. He was inspired to seek the establishment of a new and more just world order based on the unshakeable principles of freedom and respect for the individual.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

Maksim Bahdanovich could not be criticized for believing in the idea of some kind of universal State without borders. He was one of the champions of the awakening of the national self-awareness of his people to whose selflessness we owe a great deal for the establishment of our modern State, the Republic of Belarus.

In order to understand the historical destiny of our people, we must of necessity take a look at the past that would shed light on the darkness of long-past centuries with their bloody past and on our movement towards freedom, the glorious and also tragic pages of our national history, which would help us better understand and try to envision our future. Today we note with pride that the traditions of Belarusian statehood have a history that goes back many centuries. It was embodied in various forms of a State system and reached its zenith in the Middle Ages. The Belarusians - whose language was used back in 1588 to draft the Statute, a code of legal norms which was advanced - even classic - for the Europe of that day, never showed any feelings of enmity or hostility towards their neighbours nor any desire to kindle the flames of disputes among nationalities.

The traditions of statehood were again made manifest in the first quarter of the twentieth century, when the Belarusian State was proclaimed. During the relatively short time of its independent existence it was recognized de jure and de facto by a number of European States, with which it began to develop bilateral relations.

It would, however, be wrong to portray the history of our ethnos as a serene sequence of achievements and successes. I think the contrary would be true. It is hard to find in Europe any people that has suffered so much and been so destitute, and which has so often been exposed to devastating raids,

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invasions and acts of aggression. Over the last 600 years, according to a very conservative estimate we have lost in the flames of war no fewer than 12 million people. Because of fate our geopolitical situation - at the crossroads between Central and Eastern Europe - was tragically reflected in the destinies of Belarusians, casting them implacably from the moloch of one war to another. Between the hammer and the anvil, between two strong neighbours - that, very generally speaking, is the way I would express the quintessential nature of our national history. Thus it was in the late eighteenth century, when under certain well-known historical conditions the Belarusian lands became part of Russia. Thus it was in 1918 in Brest, when the territory of Belarus was carved up at will, forgetting to ask the people what it wanted. Thus it was in 1921, when the tragic, for us, Riga Treaty was signed, cutting up into two parts for almost 20 years the war-ravaged, bleeding land of Belarus. Thus it was in January 1945 at Yalta, where the ruthless hand of Stalin laid hold of the map and manipulated the destinies of hundreds of thousands of Belarusians. We do not want to be a shadow of our neighbours; we do not want to be the small change in a big European game.

I say this, not in order to reverse the course of history or rewrite it: the past remains the past. But today we are absolutely devoted to the spirit of the Helsinki and Paris agreements and we believe in the unconditional recognition of the primacy of international law.

Now my motherland is experiencing another stage in its development of statehood. That is why I am deeply moved to inform this world parliament, the entire international community, that on 25 August of this year, a decision by the supreme legislative organ of our Republic gave constitutional status to the declaration of State sovereignty of the Republic. Our Supreme Soviet also

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proclaimed the political and economic independence of the Republic, and on 19 September of this year took a decision to rename the State - it is now called the Republic of Belarus - and also to establish new State symbols, the white-red-white flag and the coat of arms, the Pahonia, or Chase, as it is called, which have a centuries-old history behind them.

So the first steps have already been taken on the way to develop sovereignty expressed in the conclusion or start of the negotiating processes with contiguous States - Russia, Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania - a desire to build bilateral relations with our neighbours and other States on an equal footing.

The Republic of Belarus is counting on support from the world community for its initiatives and is hoping to establish full inter-State relations, to develop mutually advantageous cooperation in all areas with all interested States.

These days we are often asked, What guidelines will Belarus use in its foreign policy? Answering the question from this lofty rostrum I would say that the vital interests of the Belarusian nation are the cornerstone of our policy in international affairs; a balanced approach and realism are components of that policy.

By dint of this, the foreign policy principles and priorities of the Republic of Belarus might be summarized in the following points.

First, we must achieve real independence and sovereignty for our State. We must establish favourable domestic and external political conditions leading to a "wave" of diplomatic recognition. Yet we realize that sovereignty is not so much something that is proclaimed or declared, but rather a quality that is recognized and confirmed. For Belarus, sovereignty

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is not merely a goal; it is a difficult, thorny path, the historical distance of which is probably long. In no way can we slow down these processes; we would simply find ourselves on the sidelines of European development were we to do so. Nor can we speed them up, for that would lead to a dangerous divorce from reality. The Belarusian way to genuine sovereignty, as we hope, will be consistent, calm and civilized, reflecting the unshakable traditions of our tolerance and our respect for the peoples living in the territory of the Republic, taking account of the constant growth of the national self-awareness of our people. For us, sovereignty and independence, won by much suffering in our tragic history, is the desired ideal, the hope for survival in the extreme Chernobyl situation in which we now find ourselves. In fact, we have been proceeding towards this over the last centuries, and only in the late twentieth century have we really gained the eternal human right to be masters of our own land.

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The second point is cooperation in the establishment of a unified economic space, a new union of sovereign States. We are in favour of preserving, developing and giving a new quality to traditionally established economic ties, and on this basis we favour participation in the process of creating a community of sovereign States to replace the USSR. The realistic approach Belarus has taken tells us that destroying the work of decades and establishing tariff barriers would lead to a sharp reduction in living standards and would be detrimental not to the Belarusian people alone. According to the available statistics this would mean for the sovereign republics losses of tens and hundreds of billions of roubles. Therefore the Republic of Belarus favours a common economic, energy and transport space within the former USSR, functioning on the principles of a modern, regulated market. We adhere to this approach not only in respect of the economic interaction within the borders of the former USSR but also at the global level. In this connection Belarus is following with interest the Uruguay Round being conducted under the aegis of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT); this is broadening the framework of the universal international trading system.

The third point is mobilization of international support to resolve the Chernobyl problem. This problem is of crucial importance to us because Chernobyl was the worst disaster of the twentieth century - as far as its consequences go - and will be our national tragedy for centuries to come. Everything in this world is transient. We will all disappear from it, but there will be an endless stream of new generations of Belarusians who will continue this difficult, agonizing search for answers to the most complex questions posed during those few days of April 1986 by the Chernobyl disaster.

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That is why the Chernobyl problems have become one of the main priorities of our foreign policy. In fact Chernobyl has turned out to be a catalyst in our movement towards sovereignty. Our people, our Republic, has always been amongst the first to assist others. However, at the most difficult time of our sufferings from Chernobyl we felt that we had been left alone to face our national misfortune in a country that was being torn by many contradictions.

To be frank, it must be acknowledged that the socio-economic system in our country was not prepared properly to react adequately to this major nuclear disaster of the century, to this tragic challenge of history. Members can judge for themselves. During the five years since the disaster, Belarus has received from Union funds for the Republic's health care a mere 5 million foreign exchange roubles whereas its annual requirements for health care are 75 million. At the same time, the Ministry for Atomic Energy of the USSR, the main culprit of the Chernobyl disaster, in 1990 received from its export deliveries $US 650 million. All this compels us to take another look at previous assessments and approaches and to focus now on the problem of international cooperation.

However, it is not a question only of assistance in that narrow, traditional, even over-simplified meaning of the word, as was the case before, with food assistance, clothing, and so on. Belarus, Ukraine and Russia now need very special equipment such as children's oncological tomographs, the latest diagnostic equipment, the most modern kinds of oncological preparations and the latest methods for treating the many diseases from which dozens of countries are suffering.

The tragic experience of Chernobyl, a unique planetary disaster, can be understood and handled only by the collective intellect of mankind, only

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through comprehensive international cooperation. In a way we have inherited the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a focal point of human suffering. The course of events has shown that practical implementation of the programme of cooperation under United Nations auspices is not easy; indeed, it has encountered obstacles.

In these conditions we are particularly grateful to countries that stated at the pledging conference on 20 September that they would participate financially in international programmes to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe. We are sincerely grateful to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl, Ms. Margaret Anstee, for breathing life into the well-known General Assembly resolution 45/190 and for doing so much also to convene the conference of donor countries and to coordinate future international cooperation.

Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar has constantly demonstrated a warm, friendly attitude towards Belarus and has visited our Republic. We have profound respect for him as one of the most authoritative political leaders of our time.

The fourth point is transformation of Belarus into a nuclear-free zone and a neutral State. I wish to stress that the achievement of this priority is dictated by the fundamental interests of our people, especially in the post-Chernobyl era. In the course of moving towards this goal proclaimed in the Declaration on State Sovereignty of Belarus, in October 1990 we put forward from this lofty rostrum the initiative of establishing a nuclear-free belt - from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, including Belarus, the three Baltic States and Ukraine. The experience of this past year has certainly shown that in putting forward that idea our evaluation of these processes was

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correct. Moreover, over the past year and in particular over the past month we have moved even farther towards the goal that we proclaimed than we had thought possible. A powerful catalyst for these and other processes with regard to deepening the democratization process was the defeat of the August putsch in Moscow.

Taking the next step forward, we are proposing today that practical consultations be held with all interested parties regarding the necessary measures to establish such a nuclear-free zone and also the procedures, methods and steps to be taken to that end, including the international legal steps.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

The truth is that the Belarus people is tired of being hostage to other people's military decisions. Far too often, and all too ruthlessly, our well-being, culture and future were trampled underfoot by the military boot. Today, we are doubly reluctant to be hostages to other people's nuclear decisions. The future of the nuclear potential on the territory of Belarus, its use, deployment or re-deployment, can be and should be resolved only with the participation of Belarus, not behind its back. At the same time we state clearly that monitoring and management of nuclear weapons must of course lie with the unified centre.

Belarus will promote the speedy ratification of agreements between the USSR and the United States on reducing nuclear arsenals.

While understanding the great complexity and delicacy of the military and political problems here and knowing that their solution depends on European realities and the positions of other countries, Belarus considers it necessary to have appropriate channels for conducting the necessary international work to bring about these goals. These very considerations compelled us at the beginning of this year to address the Conference on Disarmament, working on a permanent basis in Geneva, to request membership there.

The fifth point concerns integrating Belarus into the all-European process.

At the present time we are re-analysing the problem of integrating Belarus into the Helsinki process. If Belarus, particularly in its dire post-Chernobyl situation, becomes a site for the deployment of large numbers of armaments and armies withdrawn from Central and Eastern Europe, should we not have a say in the military decisions being taken during this process? If human rights and the exercise of them in our territory are to be determined

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from now by the laws of Belarus and not any other acts, should we not too participate in the fashioning of the contents of the Helsinki humanitarian basket? If the economic realities for the existence of an 11-million-strong nation, including settling foreign trade problems, are now to be determined by decisions taken in Minsk, should not the capital of Belarus participate directly in fashioning the common economic space in Europe?

We do not see any serious obstacles to participants in the Helsinki process recognizing the new realities and accepting the equal participation of Belarus in its important efforts which, to a large extent, will determine the future of the continent. The proper time for this might be the foreign-minister-level meeting of the countries of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, to be held in January 1992 in Prague.

The times we are living in pose many new questions, and we must all give a lot of thought to them and work hard to see to it that answers to them will provide the stability that our people seek - genuine stability, not pseudo-stability; long-lasting, not fleeting stability; stability based on justice, without any discrimination. Anyone familiar with history can say that discrimination and stability are political antonyms.

The sixth point concerns creating conditions for establishing market structures in Belarus for its economic development.

We view the unequal levels of economic development as the basic destabilizing factor in Europe as well as at the global level, and today this contains the seeds of further cataclysms.

What we previously called the ideological confrontation turned out to be totally surmountable, but it is being replaced by new contradictions stemming from highly unequal levels of economic development and of the conditions

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necessary to start and expand a market economy. Of course, they can be ignored. So far they are not as acute as the economic problems in North-South relations, but I am convinced that if we do not act now, then in a few years' time they will definitely recur. Economic migration alone can become a serious problem for all Europeans. Of course, as an antidote, the protective functions of the State, stricter visa regulations and the building of camps for displaced persons could be used, but all these administrative measures - which, by the way, can be called a kind of iron curtain - are doomed to failure, as history suggests.

The way to resolve many tragedies that lie in wait for peoples that have gained their long-awaited freedom should be sought in the market economy. Belarus is consciously adopting this approach, and recently a number of in-depth reforms have been implemented. We are now focusing on establishing a legal, socio-economic infrastructure for the market economy. Dozens of laws that lay down the basis for business activities have been enacted, or soon will be.

Our serious and fundamental attitude to the market economy stems from the fact that we view it as a means of accumulating material resources for resolving many problems caused by Chernobyl. But the need at this time to concentrate enormous resources in this area is making this shift to a new type of economic activity difficult.

The new political and economic realities facing the Republic - further, complicated by the Chernobyl factor - have compelled us to re-evaluate the adequacy of the current contribution of Belarus to international organizations. This is a complicated methodological and political problem.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

But for us it is relevant, and we are prepared to engage in consultations and to have close cooperation with the appropriate organizations in order to find possible approaches to resolving it.

The seventh point relates to ensuring ecological security.

Unless this is achieved, any further progress for mankind and its survival at the beginning of the third millenium will be impossible.

In this context, the preparations for the Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992 in Brazil, are of primary importance. We must see to it that this Conference become a landmark in mankind's growing awareness of the full magnitude of the ecological threat and of coordinating for the next decades common approaches to a strategy for ecological cooperation among States.

The decision to create in the United Nations at the beginning of 1992, on an experimental basis, the Centre for Emergency Environmental Assistance is a clear sign of success in moving towards this new understanding of the problem.

We are convinced that it is high time - particularly bearing in mind the bitter lessons of Chernobyl - to think about creating, within the United Nations system, a mechanism that would be automatically triggered and provide large-scale humanitarian assistance in the case of major disasters.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

The eighth point provides for free interchange of cultures. Here our basis is the universal value of culture; its great humanitarian function. We are convinced that culture should play a major role in the rapprochement, integration and development of mutual understanding among States and peoples.

Accordingly, we will be playing a more active role in forming the cultural basis and preserving the heritage of Europe and the world and in restructuring our relations with our neighbours on the basis of constant cultural values and ideals and common traditions in our spiritual lives. Culture is national in its essence, but knows no boundaries. For example, the stained glass windows in the cathedrals of Reims, Prague, Krakow and those of the cathedrals of the Belarusian city of Grodno are close in their spirit and artistic form. This example demonstrates the great magnetic force of culture, its irreplaceable integrating role, and its historic mission. Belarusian culture has always been developed in the best humanitarian traditions of Europe, creating a favourable environment for the different forms of human genius.

We note with satisfaction that the writer F. Dostoevsky, the composers I. Stravinsky and S. Shostakovich, the artist M. Chagall, and the poet Guillaume Apollinaire, all had their ancestral roots in Belarus, and all made a significant contribution to the spiritual treasure house of our peoples and influenced the culture of the world with their philosophical depth, their innovative methods, their originality and individuality and refined aesthetic principles. We are determined to create conditions for the free movement of peoples, the exchange of ideas and cultural values, by preserving and developing our age-old tradition of tolerance.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

Our great interest in the work of agencies and organs of the United Nations system may be explained to a large extent by the fact that for many years the United Nations was for Belarus virtually the only window onto the outside world. But even in these new circumstances, when the Republic is beginning to establish and expand bilateral relations, the significance of the United Nations will endure. Therefore, we are particularly mindful of the historic role the Organization will play in the future and we are ready to work with others to enhance its authority and prestige.

At this time the renaissance of the United Nations is being noted by all. Accordingly, we see renewed interest in the United Nations by the large States too, which sometimes believed the United Nations to be marginal. We are a small State and we welcome this process. Therefore, it must be noted that it reflects a living truth that if in certain sharp turning-points in history the interest in the United Nations increases, this demonstrates that it is necessary as an instrument for cooperation and mutual creative action by States.

It must be recognized, however, that the world has undergone a radical change. Therefore, the instruments being used by the world community must also be updated. The required changes in the United Nations can be made without shaking the foundations established in 1945, but on the basis of the new realities in our reading of the existing Charter of the Organization. We are proposing at this session of the General Assembly that a process of consultations could be initiated, the subject of which would not be merely the machinery of the General Assembly itself but, in the broader sense, the new role of the United Nations as a whole.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

In particular, we need to establish consensus on the new role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace, and the main importance of this goes beyond resolving a specific conflict, such as what is happening now in the Persian Gulf region. In fact, there is a new understanding of the forms and methods of work of the United Nations appropriate to this particular period of world history, where the primacy of universal interests over selfish aspirations is being recognised.

The renaissance of the United Nations is not a mere fortuitous occurrence, nor is it episodic. It has been prepared by the entire development of mankind in recent decades. The Organisation, the idea of which was clearly ahead of its time, is now in step with its time. The national State renaissance of Belarus, which we are seeing now, is no mere happenstance, nor is it a mere episode. Now is the time for embodying in practice the age-old aspirations of Belarusians, a quarter of all Slav peoples. In ancient times we were between the Varangians and the Greeks. Now we feel that we are part of the community of nations and the renaissance of Belarus is our unique contribution to the renaissance of the world family of nations. A family is truly powerful and prosperous when that time of prosperity is valid for all members.

Blessed be the future of my native Belarus!

Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): In the name of the people and Government of Colombia, allow me to congratulate Ambassador Shihabi of Saudi Arabia on his election to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly. We place great hopes in the results of the work of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly under his illustrious leadership. It will be the task of the Assembly to point the United Nations

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in the right direction in order for it to carry out the purposes and principles of its Charter at this crucial phase of our history.

I should also like to express the appreciation of the Government of Colombia for the work of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. Ten years of intelligent and unstinting effort in the service of international peace and justice give the measure of this man. We acknowledge the scope of his contribution and salute him as a Latin American who has brought honour to our region. He is aware of our admiration and appreciation and is familiar with the wishes that were expressed collectively by the Heads of State of Latin America at the summit meeting at Guadalajara.

I welcome the admission of the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands to membership of the Organization and I welcome their participation in the General Assembly's debates.

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

We are living in a time of profound change, which will have a formidable impact on the future of each of our countries. However, the ambitious mandate of the United Nations remains in force. That speaks well for the vision of those who were its founders. It would be very hard for us to cast this mandate in different terms today. The maintenance of peace, the defence of citizens' rights and the attainment of the collective well-being through growth and development continue to be the guiding principles in relations between States.

Yet a significant change can be seen in the very rapidity of the adjustments and transformations we are witnessing. Hence, we call upon members urgently to pursue the objectives referred to and to take advantage of this session of the General Assembly to reflect on the challenges of our times.

Colombia has always been an enthusiastic supporter of multilateralism and cooperation as the irreplaceable cornerstones of an international system that is committed to meeting the needs of the developing world. Without peace there can be no growth or development, and it is only by establishing social justice and eradicating poverty that lasting peace can be achieved. A stable peace requires that nations establish the social and economic conditions necessary to deal properly with their principal needs.

In the light of the relaxation of East-West tensions, and since there must be a constructive dialogue between North and South, it will be up to the United Nations system to ensure and protect the right of States which, unlike the great Powers, do not have effective defence mechanisms. For such countries, the United Nations has to be the guarantor of rights, most especially those of sovereignty and self-determination.

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

While it is clear that there have been major advances in the international political arena, as demonstrated by the end of the cold war, the growing respect for human rights and the progress of democracy, this is not the case in the economic arena, where considerable uncertainty still prevails. Despite the sacrifices and adjustments made by many developing countries and the opening up of their economies to trade and investment flows, access of their goods and services to the principal markets is constantly being hindered by various new obstacles and barriers. The most vehement defenders of liberalized trade are engaged today in a major confrontation that is threatening the very stability of multilateralism and, in particular, the fate of the developing countries, whose interests are subordinated to the competition between the major economic blocs.

The Ministerial Declaration signed in Caracas by the Latin American Foreign Ministers at the Preparatory Meeting for the Eighth Conference on Trade and Development, refers with concern to the fact that those countries that are pressing most urgently for an open international system are precisely the ones that stray the farthest from the rules of the game by increasingly applying practices that distort international trade.

For example, the coffee industry is facing a drastic situation, owing to the lack of economic clauses in the International Coffee Agreement. Current price levels, in real terms, are the lowest they have been in the last 50 years; this has serious consequences for the economies of the coffee-producing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In order to correct this difficult situation, this week the producer nations in London presented an emergency plan designed to put some order in the market; in this

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regard, Colombia has asked for the support and cooperation of the industrialized nations.

Colombia comes before the Assembly and into the international arena with new credentials. It is a country with a promising future, which has succeeded in facing the challenges of the present with honesty, transparency and boldness, making changes of major importance in its 100-year-old National Constitution. The new Colombian Constitution, a reflection of the political will of the various sectors of public opinion, opens the institutional doors of the Republic in a democratic, civilized way so that new ideas regarding political participation and citizens' rights can be introduced.

The new Colombia is encouraging young people to become involved in running the State. It has mechanisms to make the application of justice more flexible and expeditious. It generously extends to groups that have taken up arms the possibility of being honourably reintegrated into civilian life. The new Colombia seeks, both nationally and internationally, the redistribution of opportunity to individuals and nations so that we can all enjoy the fruits of growth and development and so that the gap between the haves and the have-nots will not continue to grow wider.

In the Bill of Rights that we have adopted, power rests with the individual. The State exists to serve the citizen, to protect him and to promote conditions that will enable all Colombians to develop freely. The Constitution enshrines a broad range of civil and political rights, safeguards social and economic rights, recognizes group rights and establishes mechanisms to provide for their effective protection.

We see in this new Colombia arising from the efforts of President Cesar Gaviria - a young and bold leader who dared extend an early welcome to the future barely 13 months ago - an example of what can be

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achieved when there is a desire for consensus, the political will to attain it and generosity in handling complex situations.

We present these changes with pride and dignity and with the conviction that we have found the peaceful path on which new generations of Colombians shall travel, sowing along the way the seeds of a just, prosperous and equitable future. That is the new Colombia, which is now attending this General Assembly.

In addition, waves of change and renewal can be seen in Latin America and the Caribbean region. As regards peace, democratic participation, human rights and integration, our continent is moving forward at a rapid pace. Multilateralism has become a dominant force, as demonstrated by the various processes of association that are being carried out jointly and in parallel. It would be difficult to find a time of greater harmony and integration among the member countries of our region. The Rio Group, the Group of 3, the Cartagena Pact, the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and the strengthened efforts towards integration in Central America and the Caribbean region are a reflection of the processes of cooperation now under way. These are political, economic and cultural dialogues that are increasingly strengthening our roots, our experiences and our future, resulting in a firmer commitment among our nations to pool efforts in the joint action required to overcome obstacles that are common to us all and that we could not overcome individually. The negotiated solution reached by Argentina and Chile in their border dispute and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Guatemala and Belize are a reflection of the climate of political harmony and resolve in our region.

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

As regards the Initiative for the Americas, Colombia welcomed it from the very moment of its promulgation as an ambitious plan for cooperation, and appreciated the multilateral character of some of its components. Consequently, Colombia hopes that Europe and Japan will join with the United States so that the multilateral investment fund can become a reality in the immediate future.

A united, future-oriented continent, which is capable of solving the basic needs of its people in peace, will be a source of support for United Nations efforts to achieve an open and integrated economic order.

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

This reference to our continent would be incomplete if we did not mention the sense of obligation in our region to promote a rapprochement between the United States and Cuba. The same suspicions and mistrust that for so many years polarized relations among so many countries, and that led to the cold war that we all went through, now undermine the trust between these two Member States of the United Nations.

We are aware of the profound differences that separate them, but we believe that the new climate of peace and cooperation that has so swiftly suffused international relations could well serve as a basis for the frank and open discussion of unresolved matters.

We hope that the winds of renewal and democratization that are blowing throughout the world can be incorporated autonomously by Cuba into its political order. On the other hand, no one should underestimate the deep historical, geographic and cultural roots that unite Cuba with our region.

The changes that have occurred on the international scene since the creation of the United Nations, along with the appearance of new and complex problems, have emphasized, among the Member States of this Organization, the need to reflect on the most appropriate way to respond to the reality of today's world and on its future prospects.

The new world scene demands a renewed United Nations. For this reason, the Rio Group has submitted for the consideration of all States certain guidelines as to our concept of the modernization of this Organization.

We believe that the process of revitalizing the United Nations ought not to be limited to simplifying and correcting its procedures or its operating patterns. The substantial increase in the Organization's membership, the new political realities and the new power structure in the world all call for a

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

review of the existing criteria regarding the representation of the Member States at all levels of the system and their effective participation in the decision-making process. Achievement of these objectives would help to guarantee that the mandates issued are a clear and balanced reflection of the aspirations of the international community, and in particular those of the developing nations.

It is necessary to strengthen the General Assembly so that it can be a faithful interpreter of the will of the States. This must be the forum in which matters of global interest are debated and where efforts are made to promote an understanding of the importance of multisectoral action that will lead to successful international cooperation directed towards the social and economic growth and development of all peoples.

Just as important as strengthening the General Assembly is the need to strengthen the office of the Secretary-General. This office must be provided with the instruments that will permit the independent exercise of its functions and the faithful attainment of the principles and objectives of the Organization.

Improved coordination among United Nations agencies requires re-evaluation of the Security Council. It is necessary to give it a form in keeping with new realities and to study mechanisms to prevent excessive influence on the part of a few countries. Since 1945, Colombia has been opposed to the power of veto and believes that this is a good time to re-examine its advantageousness.

My country has urged that international relations be governed by International Law and by the principles of the United Nations Charter. We consider the work done by the International Court of Justice to be of vital importance.

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

Today, more than ever, international cooperation is required to combat organized crime. President Cesar Gaviria has reiterated that the links in the chains of crime are reaching farther into all countries and that criminal groups are becoming true multinational organizations. Today's criminals pay no heed to nationalities or borders. The internationalization of crime must be opposed by the universalization of justice.

Closer cooperation must be sought between judicial power and the authorities of the various States. Colombia is developing a strategy aimed at expediting the procedures for furnishing evidence and probative material requested by foreign authorities. We believe it is the moral and legal obligation of all States to make available any evidence they have against criminals, particularly if these criminals are involved in crimes of multinational scope such as drug trafficking and terrorism. These actions must be reinforced by promoting legal mechanisms and programmes within the framework of the United Nations.

One problem that is of great concern to my Government is that of arms dealing. Clearly, in order to reduce or limit arms dealing, as in any business, it will be necessary to reduce the demand as well as the supply. We believe that this is a most propitious moment to move ahead in this area.

The end of the cold war offers us a great opportunity to invest in development, using resources devoted to military expenditures. The "peace dividend" should be backed up by plans to switch over to civil production. In addition, efforts for disarmament should be complemented by measures to reduce the pressures that lead to arms production and exportation. The authorities of all our countries should commit themselves to giving priority to the establishment of effective control over the licit and illicit transfer of

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

arms, especially when they are being sent to areas of conflict or to regions affected by the violence generated by criminal activity.

The international community must recognize the consequences of poverty for world stability. For a number of years now, Colombia has pressed initiatives in various forums in the search for a solution that should be approached with the same sense of urgency that other crisis situations have aroused.

Priority must be given on the international agenda to reactivating the economies of developing countries by opening up the markets of industrialized countries to their exports. This is the type of solidarity that we seek from the developed world.

The relaxing of tensions between the super-Powers has not put bread on the table of the poor. Neither poverty nor social injustice has been eliminated. On the contrary, for most countries, the conditions for development continue to be adverse: technology is beyond their grasp, the major markets for their products continue to be highly protected, and their status as debtors keeps them in the position of being net exporters of capital.

Colombia has offered to be the host country for the eighth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1992. In order to ensure the success of the eighth UNCTAD, we must reformulate the criteria and mechanisms related to the economic and social development of our countries. It will be an opportunity to create new channels of communication between the North and the South around themes that have traditionally created controversy, but that we must now examine from the perspectives that currently characterize international dialogue. The backdrop for the meeting is the future

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

functioning of the Organization and the evolving negotiations of the Uruguay Round.

The eighth UNCTAD has to be the start of a new phase, of an era in which to take advantage of the opportunities that have opened up for international cooperation following the end of the East-West conflict. A successful restructuring of UNCTAD, based on cooperation between the various groups of countries that comprise it, would be a good precedent for the reforms that need to be made in the United Nations system.

Colombia looks forward with optimism to the forthcoming Conference on the Environment and Development which is to take place in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. This "Earth Summit" will have to strengthen the mechanisms of international cooperation around this global theme. Neither the application of a model of rapacious development in the South nor the abandonment of economic growth is an option for solving the environmental crisis. Based on the joint responsibility of the nations of the North and of the South, it is necessary to open up possibilities for a model of sustainable development. The industrialized countries have to pay the ecological debt they have incurred with mankind.

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

In the field of human rights, the Organisation can justly claim that it has performed a successful task of universal scope. It is high time for the culture of human rights to become part of our civilisation.

Advances in democracy and progress in solving conflicts require conditions of development and social justice that allow the full play of economic, social and cultural rights. The World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 will therefore be one of the most important events of this decade.

Despite the various national perspectives, we believe that a consensus is gradually building as to the kind of international environment that we must all promote and the contribution that all of us from the various regions and groups of countries can make to that new global context for peace and development. The developed countries must act with imagination and generosity to ensure that the developing countries have ample and sufficient resources to enable them to undertake the productive investments that they could not manage to make alone.

There is no better place than this to call for peace. The success the Salvadorian people and Government have achieved, with the support of the United Nations, is the best tribute to, and example of, Latin America's contribution to world peace.

Today we have an unprecedented opportunity to face up with optimism to a new era for our Organization. We must jointly and severally accept this historic opportunity as authors of the promising future of mankind.

Mr. CARIAS ZAPATA (Honduras) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the people and the Government of Honduras, I should like to express to the President our congratulations on his election to stewardship over the work of the current session of the General Assembly. The international community, in entrusting so delicate a set of responsibilities to him, has

(Mr. Carias Zapata, Honduras)

paid a well-deserved tribute to his personal merits as well as to Saudi Arabia, which only a few months ago successfully defended its threatened sovereignty.

I should like to place on record the appreciation of the Government of Honduras for the direct, effective and unceasing work done by the Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, in carrying out his highly responsible tasks. I should also like to congratulate the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania on their admission to membership of the United Nations. Their participation will undoubtedly contribute to the renewal of criteria and mechanisms, thus furthering the full realization of the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter.

In welcoming the Baltic States, we can do no less than express our satisfaction at witnessing an act of historic reparation of great significance to the active reality of an international order based on law and justice. Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia were absorbed by the Soviet Union by an act of force during the turmoil of the Second World War. Their forcible annexation was something which, sooner or later, had to be subjected to the sole proof of legitimacy the modern world knows: self-determination for its peoples, freely expressed under clear and objective rules and guarantees.

This is indeed what did take place throughout 1990 and 1991 and these fundamental facts, this exercise of fundamental rights, are indeed what the central authorities of the Soviet Union and the international community have recognized. It is the right approach, and it is the approach which our Organization should not only encourage, but rather resolutely promote by all the political, legal and economic means at its disposal.

(Mr. Carias Zapata, Honduras)

The admission of the Republic of Korea is also an act of justice; as the Korean people has offered continual proof of its adherence to the democratic ideal, and as this friendly, peace-loving nation, despite the vicissitudes to which its geopolitical situation has subjected it in the strategic confrontation between the great Powers, has managed to move forwards with evident prosperity and its own identity, which fully justify its incorporation as a new Member of the United Nations.

We are sure that the simultaneous admission of the two Korean States will be grounds for optimism for the dialogue on reunification and peaceful coexistence that the authorities of the two States are conducting and for a peaceful solution to the disputes separating them.

The transformation in the world scene is taking place because of a radical change in political perceptions. This new vision has led, as a consequence, to concepts which are linked not only with the internal economic production systems of States and the representativity of their Governments but also with national autonomy and identity, which help to forge a new and just geopolitical system. All this has paved the way for an unprecedented advance in the world-wide consolidation of democracy.

The recent events in the Soviet Union are further proof of these trends. My Government places on record its support for, and satisfaction at, the display of commitment to the ideals of democratic change by the Russian people and reaffirms its full readiness to develop greater ties of cooperation with the Soviet Union and with the sovereign States of the Union.

The United Nations, because of its universal nature, has taken the lead in seeking to keep the development of these political phenomena within the framework of the aims and principles set out in its Charter. When far-reaching

(Mr. Carias Zapata, Honduras)

questions arise within various Member States of our Organization about the new destinies their peoples wish to forge, and when bilateral and regional relations go through acute crises in the quest for a new order based on justice and equity, the United Nations Charter gives us the lasting principles which afford us the right solutions to the difficulties which arise.

This is the best moment for us to support the Secretary-General in his initiative to enable the United Nations to practice real preventive diplomacy as an active part in forming and maintaining the new international order.

Also, my Government would like to express its gratitude for the role the United Nations is playing through its peace-keeping missions. The operations the Organizations has carried out in this field have led to a reduction in tensions and are helping to establish the necessary climate of confidence to master the sensitive situations which periodically occur in various regions.

(Mr. Carias Zapata, Honduras)

The Government of Honduras is participating in the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, which is supervising the organization of the referendum to be held in the Western Sahara. The confrontation that has occurred in that territory must thus give way, with the help of the United Nations, to a political solution in which the will of the people is expressed by a vote under international supervision.

In the context of current international problems, the series of conflicts subsumed under the heading "Middle East" has over time come to be seen not only as extremely delicate but sometimes as almost impossible to resolve. In our judgement, the emotional burden created by various persecutions, wars, territorial conflicts and strategic considerations in a bipolar world used to contribute, among other factors, to frustrating intiatives aimed at rapprochement and any realistic search for lasting peace in that region. Today, by contrast, the Middle East is also seeing emerge the outlines of solutions under the auspices of this Organization. The convening of a conference with wide-ranging participation - aimed at helping both the Israeli and the Arab sides involved tackle existing disputes - is gaining increasing acceptance as the best and most integral way of achieving peace and reconciliation in that region.

Meanwhile, in South Africa, new political steps have brought about the formal dismantling of the apartheid laws. This is a positive development that must be seen through to effective completion via practical measures that have real impact on the vast majority of the population. Above all, there must be a deepening of the dialogue between the Government and the African National Congress with a view to ensuring an orderly transition to a society of greater justice and shared prosperity.

(Mr. Carias Zapata, Honduras)

In Central America, the United Nations contribution to peace has been timely and invaluable. The socio-political problems faced by certain countries, together with tensions between States that reflect the East-West conflict in the area, triggered an acute crisis in the 1980s that posed a real threat to regional and international peace and security. In that context, Honduras promoted from the outset greater and effective participation by third countries and the United Nations towards a solution to the Central American crisis.

In 1991, because of firm abidance by commitments made by the Presidents of the five countries of the Esquipulas process, and through the establishment of democracy in all the Central American countries, it can be said that the phase of confrontation has given way to understanding and cooperation.

The Government of Honduras resolutely supports progress made in that context last week and yesterday within the framework of the dialogue for peace, justice and democracy in El Salvador. We are firmly committed to the idea that the accords that have been negotiated between the Government headed by President Cristiani and the Frente Farabundo Martí should be consolidated. We hope there will soon be a cease-fire and that the reconciliation for which the Salvadorian family strives will be fully achieved, so that within that neighbouring nation a democratic and tolerant society will take root, thus expressing the dedication and hard work of the Salvadorian people.

Towards that end, the presence in Central America of the United Nations continues to be necessary. The work of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) is crucial to ensure compliance with the accords worked out between the Government and the Frente Farabundo Martí in connection with human rights and a future verification of the cease-fire.

(Mr. Carias Zapata, Honduras)

Moreover, my Government maintains that we must keep United Nations observers in certain border areas between El Salvador and Honduras. That is why, along with the other Central American Governments, we would like to request the extension for another six months of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA). The United Nations participation is thus not confined merely to monitoring compliance with certain commitments which the Central American Governments assumed via the Esquipulas II accords; it also involves the adoption of approaches to resolve El Salvador's domestic problems, a contribution which the Government of Honduras supports.

In the specific field of Central American security, the Security Commission that has been meeting, with United Nations participation on an observer basis, has not made the progress my Government had hoped for. Because of the persistence of armed conflict, there has been a delay in handing over an inventory of installations and armaments on the part of the military and security forces in each country. In Honduras' case, such an inventory was submitted on 6 June to the Secretary-General of the United Nations as well as to the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States. Beyond that, we must study and adopt machinery that will ensure a military balance among the States of the region.

In this context, my Government has taken the initiative to propose to our Central American neighbours a comprehensive draft regional security treaty, a document that was taken note of by the Central American Presidents at the tenth regional summit conference held from 15 to 17 July this year. It has been the subject of negotiation since then with a view to the adoption, before the end of this year, of a pertinent instrument on the subject.

(Mr. Carias Zapata, Honduras)

The task of bringing peace to Central America will never be complete if the leaders and their peoples do not manage to meet and master the major challenges facing us as we seek to achieve sustained economic development in the context of societies in which social justice, liberty, democracy and development will be indestructible pillars of independence and sovereignty.

The President of Honduras, Rafael Leonardo Callejas, together with the Presidents of the other five Central American countries, has therefore been promoting economic integration in Central America to the greatest possible extent. Effective steps have been taken to ensure that, within an appropriate institutional framework and with the support of the international community, as well as the active involvement of entrepreneurs and workers as economic protagonists, we might arrive relatively soon at a standardization and progressive reduction of tariffs vis-à-vis the outside world. We also seek to establish intensive programmes of industrial conversion and an accelerated liberalization of intra-Central American trade involving industrial and agricultural products, along with a progressive integration of financial services.

The economic structural adjustments to which we are committed make genuine international solidarity more necessary than ever before. Should patterns of economic behaviour based on statistics alone continue to emerge, each country and the international community as a whole will face an era of greater distrust and despair.

(Mr. Carias Zapata, Honduras)

Economic discipline, in this global context, must be diversified and corrected through programmes of social compensation, and there must be a fast method of disbursing official loans, along with greater participation in developing countries by the financial and entrepreneurial sectors of the industrialized world. South-South cooperation must also be channelled towards more practical goals. Better means must be devised to allow us to share our experience better and use our respective competitive advantages to the best effect.

Generally speaking, my Government hopes to see a constructive dialogue between North and South that would lead us towards an all-encompassing strategy based upon consensus which would guarantee real progress towards the attainment of the goals we have set for our countries by the year 2000.

Consistent with these aspirations and these responsibilities, the Government of Honduras is organizing a Central American presidential summit meeting, to be held in my country next December, focusing on social matters and questions relating to childen. We are convinced that at that time we shall be able to work out a strategy for human development in Central America which, besides involving a commitment to dealing with the traditional problems of poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, school abandonment and unemployment, will come to grips with the deterioration of people's living conditions through the effects of drugs and the degradation of the environment.

In Honduras we have established a broad-ranging programme aimed at achieving social equity, including programmes to assist mothers who are heads of families, a social fund for housing, a large-scale programme for construction of classrooms with the appropriate furniture, and also the Honduran Social Investment Fund. The last-named institution has in recent

(Mr. Carias Zapata, Honduras)

months succeeded in resolving enormous problems facing communities and municipalities in Honduras with the use of local labour and technical advice from our own national experts. It enjoys an excellent reputation internationally, which makes it easier for it to gain access to resources from abroad for its human development projects.

We are also keenly aware of the support that must be given to the forthcoming Earth Summit, as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro from 1 to 12 June 1992, has been called. We are aware of the close relationship between economic development and the environment and consequently we are taking an active part in defining the basic principles that are to govern the economic and ecological behaviour of peoples and nations for ensuring a common future.

We realize that we developing countries must not make the same mistakes as the developed countries have made as regards the negative impact productive activity has had upon the environment. However, the progress and further development of the industrialized countries must not be pursued at the expense of the well-being and flourishing of our peoples. It is here that the concept of shared responsibility and international solidarity finds its full application.

As regards the regional agenda, Honduras, with its neighbours in Central America, is striving to improve the environment, by means of reforestation and protection of tropical forests, and also through a number of other measures, particularly in those areas where refugees and those displaced by the crisis of the 1980s were settled and where there have been difficulties in regard to the preservation of the environment. My Government has also assumed its responsibility for the preservation of the biosphere of the Platano River, in

(Mr. Carias Zapata, Honduras)

northern Honduras, a heritage of mankind, according to a resolution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the second most important reservoir of natural oxygen in Latin America after the Amazon region, according to a statement of the United Nations Environment Programme.

As we approach the end of this century, our Organization will be marking its fiftieth anniversary. In view of the trends of population growth in a world where natural resources are becoming more and more scarce and where technology, although it increases productivity, can also seriously harm the environment, we must stay alert. It must be understood that cooperation and solidarity between the developed North and the developing South must be the framework for our efforts for the new millennium. Let the commitment to renewed cooperation and solidarity be one of the fundamental guidelines for the United Nations for the decade now beginning. Let us endeavour thus to make possible the attainment of the noble goals set forth in the Charter of our Organization.

The PRESIDENT: One representative wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I call on the representative of France.

Mr. ROCHEREAU de la SABLIERE (France) (interpretation from French): The Minister of Education of Papua New Guinea criticized my country in regard to the underground nuclear testing we are undertaking. I shall not comment on the outrageous expressions he used, but I should like to recall that the

(Mr. Rochereau de la Sabliere, France)

underground testing that France is undertaking in its territory in Polynesia does not do any harm to the interests of the States of the region or to the health of the populations living there, nor does it harm the environment, as several international and national commissions have quite amply shown in their on-site studies. The most recent mission to make a comparative study of radioactivity was carried out in March 1991 by three different laboratories concomitantly, one of them being from the International Atomic Energy Agency. Those results will soon be published in this Organization. I should like to conclude by adding that the studies carried out by that mission are available to all, just as are the reports published every year by my country on the monitoring of radioactivity in the region.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.